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Born in 1944. Bassam Tibi earned a Ph.D. in philosophy and history from the University of Frankfurt in 1971 and received his postdoctoral lecture qualification from the University of Hamburg in 1981.

During the years from 1986 until 1988, Bassam Tibi held various visiting professorships from the German Academic Exchange Service in Asia and Africa. During these years, he furthermore was a research fellow at Harvard, Princeton, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the Rockefeller Center, Belagio. Bassam Tibi was first a visiting scholar and later research associate at Harvard University from 1988 until 1993, where he was a member of "The Fundamentalism-Project" of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1994, he served as visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley and, in 1995, as well as from 1998 until 2000, at Bilkent University, Ankara. Bassam Tibi has been a Bosch Fellow at Harvard University from 1998 until 2000 and currently also lectures as visiting professor on Islam and Arab Nationalism at the University of St. Gallen. He is Professor of International Relations and Director of the Department for International Relations at the University of Göttingen, Germany.

Bassam Tibi has published various books concerning international relations, specifically the Islamic civilisation, the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. He has received several awards and honours, including the Medal of State, First Class, in 1995.